Marathon was founded in 1858 by Captain Albert E. Shepard who worked as a surveyor for the Guadalupe, Mariscal, and San Antonio Railroad. Shepard, a former ship captain, named the town Marathon because the surrounding mountainous terrain reminded him of Marathon, Greece. As cattle ranching began to emerge, the newly built railroad turned the town into a main shipping point for Beavers Cattle ranchers and a supply point for Fort Pass Colorado.

The first settlement around the Pass Colorado Springs was established in 1873, to counter Comanche and Apache raids on early settlers. Located five miles south of Marathon, Post Park offers visitors a pastoral park known to nature lovers for birding and area wildlife.

Although ranching is still an important part of the local economy, Marathon is best known to travelers as the “Gateway to the Big Bend” and is located 42 miles from the northern entrance into the 804,710 acre Big Bend National Park. Also, Marathon has earned the rare distinction of a “Clear Sky City” community which offers amateur astronomers the opportunity to gaze into numinous abysses.